

Factors Affecting the Utilisation of Nursing Care Plan at Kafue District Hospital

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Abstract: This study was done at Kafue District Hospital to determine the factors affecting the utilization of the nursing care plan by nurses. The research necessitated by the fact that despite the knowledge that the nurses gain on the nursing care plan through basic nursing training, workshops, in-service training and experience, the problem of underutilization of this tool still continue to exist. A nursing care plan is a very essential tool in the delivery of quality care in the health institution. However, its utilization has not reached desirable level in many countries, Zambia inclusive. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence the utilization of the nursing care plan will help realize the areas that require re-enforcement in order to reach the required standard of nursing care. The literature reviewed on the nursing care plan revealed that only few studies have been done on the utilization of the nursing care plan especially on the regional and national perspective. Local studies done indicated that nursing care plan was underutilized and that the overall quality of nursing care was affected by a number of factors such as lack of hospital policy, ineffective in-service policy, ineffective in-service training, and lack of encouragement from the supervisors and shortage of staff among others.

The study design was descriptive cross section which used both quantitative and qualitative method with its study site being Kafue District Hospital in Kafue district. Convenience sampling procedure was used on all nurses who were found working on duty. Structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data from 66 respondents which were analyzed by using SPSS 16.0 version. The respondent's cooperation with the research team was very helpful and much appreciated.

Majority of the respondents (80%, 53) received inadequate training on nursing care plan while (20%, 13) of the respondents had adequate training. The findings from this study indicate that there is low utilization of the nursing care plan at Kafue district hospital.

The study shows that (100%) of the nurses at KDH had heard about the nursing care plan. The study also revealed that most of respondents (80%) received inadequate training on nursing care plan and most of the respondents (79%, 52) had positive attitude towards the utilization of the nursing care plan. However, despite having high level of knowledge, adequate training and positive attitude towards the nursing care plan the study showed that the utilization of the nursing care plan by nurses at Kafue District Hospital (KDH) was low, thus low utilization was 83%.

Recommendations will be made to Kafue District Hospital management, which will lead to notable progress in improving the utilization of the nursing care plan at the hospital thereby improving the quality of individualized patient care at the Hospital. In short, the most likely benefits of using the nursing care plan are that there will be improvements in patient care, improved patient satisfaction, and better patient feedback. The patient's hospital stay will be shortened allowing them to continue with life. The hospital and the nursing profession will enjoy a good name.

Factors identified to affect utilization in this study were; motivation, attitude, staffing levels and supervision

From the stated findings the following recommendations were made; Kafue District Hospital and Kafue District Health Office (KDHO) management to ensure Nursing care plan (NCP) tools always in stock in all wards and ensure good staffing levels, the General Nursing council to follow up staff development in skills training like the Nursing care plan and the Ministry of Health to conduct a research on the utilization of the nursing care plan on a wider scale to enable generalization of the findings.

Keywords: Nursing trends, Nursing care, practitioners of nursing, dynamism in disease approaches to nursing care, Factors influencing utilization of nursing care plan, Resistance to change

1. Introduction

Nursing care has evolved over the years from the era of disease model to the present day of scientific and holistic approach to patient care. In the past, the patient was treated and cared for based on the illness suffered with little or no consideration for his or her psychological and social interplay that often accompany physical illnesses and disabilities. The present day nursing however, considers the patient holistically with due regard to the bio psychosocial interactions and dynamism in disease production and symptom presentation. To this end, nursing is now practiced based on sound scientific principles embedded in a process called the nursing process.

Nursing is both an art and science, and the application of the nursing process is the blending of the two which has proven to be a valuable tool that is revolutionizing nursing practice as well as patient outcome globally. According to (Carolyn. 2016), Nursing care plan outlines the nursing care to be provided to an individual/ family/ community. It is the set of actions the nurse will implement to resolve/ support nursing diagnoses identified by nursing assessment. The creation of the plan is an intermediate stage of the nursing process. It guides in on-going provision of nursing care and assist in the evaluation of that care. The nursing care plan consists of a nursing diagnosis with defining characteristics (subjective and objective data that supports the diagnosis).

Nursing care plans are an important part of providing quality patient care. They help to define the nurses' role in the patient's treatment, provide consistency of care and allow the nursing team to customize its interventions for each patient. Adequate knowledge of nursing process by the nurses is critical to the implementation which helps to understand procedures to the health consumers which has significant relationship with the outcome. The UK has successfully used the nursing care plans and from such we draw our motivation. The nursing processes was met with resistance and criticism in united kingdom in 1970s but gained recognition in 1977 when the professional registering body of wales and England decreed that nursing care of patients has to studied in the sequence of nursing process. In Europe the model was given impedus when the WHO declared that the nursing process has to be taken as an integral part of nursing program (Roper et al, 1988)

Therefore, practitioners of nursing must keep abreast with good scientific understanding of the task applied; or must apply scientific knowledge in every task to be done. To a large extent, this is the only way in which the 'trained nurse' is superior to the non-qualified individuals rendering nursing services at whatever form or stage of healthcare delivery.

2. Nursing trends that may affect nursing care

Changes occurring in health care delivery and nursing are the result of societal, economic, technological, scientific, and political forces that have evolved throughout the 20th and into the 21st century.

Among the most significant changes are shifts in population demographics, particularly the increase in the aging population and the cultural diversity of the population, changing patterns of diseases, increased

technology, increased consumer expectations, the high costs of health care and changes in health care financing, and other health care reform efforts. These changes have led to institutional restructuring, staff downsizing, increased outpatient care services, decreased lengths of hospital stay, and more care being provided in the community and in the home. In addition, these have influenced our focus of nursing and health care. As a result, nurses have inadequate time to use the nursing care plan due to overwhelming demand for patient care.

Approaches to nursing care

There are two (2) widely selected approaches to Nursing Care, which have been prescribed. The two are Task Allocation and Patient Allocation. Patient Allocation looks at patient's problems in totality as an individual. The Nursing Care Plan is more appropriately used in Patient Allocation, as it looks at the patient's individual needs and how to take the necessary measures to overcome the identified problems.

Hichilema (2005) discussed the importance of patient allocation during the study conducted at the University Teaching Hospital and Kafue District Hospital. She stated that patient allocation is done only on patients in acute conditions and most of the care is done through task allocation, which is widely used in most hospitals. The study also showed that task allocation is being practiced as an alternative to the worldly advocated for patient allocation. It ensures that work is distributed evenly among the staff to avoid overlap of duties and to avoid leaving out some patients unattended to during shifts. Though Nursing Care is being provided using task allocation, it is important to determine the quality care in both task and patient allocation. The need for quality of care has led many hospitals to look for ways and means of improving the quality of care. In fact nursing care plan has been recommended by the General Nursing Council as the best tool for provision of quality nursing care.

Following the introduction of the nursing care plan by the General Nursing Council as a statutory body in the nursing education and practice, Kafue District Hospital which is one of the government health institutions also adopted the use of nursing care plan as a tool for the provision of quality care. Kafue District Hospital Action Plan (2014—2016) indicates that, it is the only first level referral hospital in Kafue District supported by 16 health centres and health posts. By this demographic virtue, the hospital faces a lot of difficulties in trying to meet the demand of patient care. Therefore, the Hospital experiences a critical shortage of nursing staff which greatly affects the adoption and utilization of the nursing care plan. Henceforth, nurses have inadequate time to spend with individual patient in order to generate information that can facilitate proper planning and execution of the care.

In this quest to facilitate the implementation of nursing care plan, Kafue District Health Management Team (KDHMT) conducts trainings, workshops and seminars for nurse educators and managers in the district. This is done in order to establish committees to monitor encourage and supervise nurses on the utilization of the nursing care plan. Due to the critically shortage of nursing staff in the hospital, nursing care plans are mainly utilized in critically ill patients and few postoperative patients. Therefore, care is emphasized on daily routines and doctor's orders

3. Statement of the problem

Despite the knowledge and skills that the nurses have received on quality care delivery through training, experiences and in service training/workshops, the nursing care plan is still underutilized at Kafue District Hospital. It was observed that the nursing care plans are only utilized in isolated cases for the critically ill patients that are on total nursing care. The other patients in the ward, the staff use task oriented approach emphasizing on routines that include carrying out Doctors' orders. According to the General Nursing Council of Zambia (GNC) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) requirement, the nursing care plans are supposed to be utilized on all patients not what is prevailing on the ground.

A study by Jansson, Pilhammar-Andersson and Forsberg (2009:611) showed that, when care plans are not used, the nurse fails to focus on patient problems. The poor quality of care can result in patients developing complications which may lead to long hospital stay, and eventually cause congestion on the hospital wards.

This congestion will eventually bring about work overload for the few available nurses as they will be required to care for a large number of patients. The high nurse patient ratio will subsequently affect the quality of care nurses provide of which the ideal is 1: 6 for enrolled nurses and 1:4 for registered nurses. On the other hand, the use of the nursing care plan can assist the nurse to avoid legal implications of negligence that may arise due to lack of documentation of care and lack of professional growth through effective nursing interventions acquired by both knowledge and experience (Yura and Walsh 1973).

When care planning is effective, however, patients are said to have rated their nursing care to be of higher quality and to have enjoyed participating in the decision-making pertinent to their care.

The low/non utilization of the nursing care in Kafue District Hospital can be attributed to poor management of facilities. The factors contributing to low utilization of this important tool at the facility are not well known. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the factors contributing to low/non utilization of the nursing care plan in Kafue District Hospital so that measures to improve the utilization of the nursing care plan can be instituted. It is hoped that the results will help the nurse managers to find means of uplifting the standards of nursing care. Apart from that, it will make the nurses realize the benefits of utilizing the nursing care plan in their quest to provide quality care to the patients which will bring out the relevance of the study. .

4. Factors influencing utilization of nursing care plan

Hospital policy

Hospital policy is the statement that outlines what an institution stands for and it acts as a guide to the employees. (Booyens.1989). Where a policy on the nursing process exist, implementation can be easy, as the nurses will have something to guide them compared to an institution without a policy.

In- service training

A Hospital that has no in service department that is supposed to conduct in house training to nurses on various aspects of care including the nursing care plan will find re orientation of nurses difficult. Absence of the in service department also disadvantages many nurses especially those who trained before the inclusion of the nursing care plan. It further disadvantages even those that might have forgotten about this tool.

Supervision

Utilization of the nursing care plan is highly effective with supervision. Where supervisors have interest in the use of the nursing care plan they are likely to influence the use of this tool effectively

Motivation

Where there is lack of motivation, nurses are likely to perform their duties less effectively. Demotivation affects the quality of care nurses provide and they may even avoid using tools such as nursing care plan which require critical thinking. Motivation can be done in so many ways such as appreciating nurses that are utilizing the nursing care plan in the presence of others in the department and also encourage them to orient others.

Staffing

Staffing levels may determine utilization of the nursing care plan. For instance, alteration in the nurse-patient ratio which is supposed to be 1:4 for registered nurses and 1:6 for enrolled nurses affects the quality of nursing care being provided. Shortage of staff results in work overload which drives the nurses away from providing a holistic and individualized care through nursing care plan.

Attitude

Positive attitude towards work can influence utilization of the nursing care plan. Nurses with a negative attitude towards work may not be able to utilize the nursing care plan to the fullest

Knowledge

The level of knowledge and skills on the nursing care plan affects its utilization in that those nurses who are knowledgeable are able to utilize it effectively.

Encouragement from supervisors

Some nurses are reluctant to utilize the care plan because of lack of encouragement from supervisors. When staffs are encouraged they feel so motivated that even their performance is enhanced. Lack of encouragement leads to de-motivation, frustration subsequent abandoning the nursing care plan

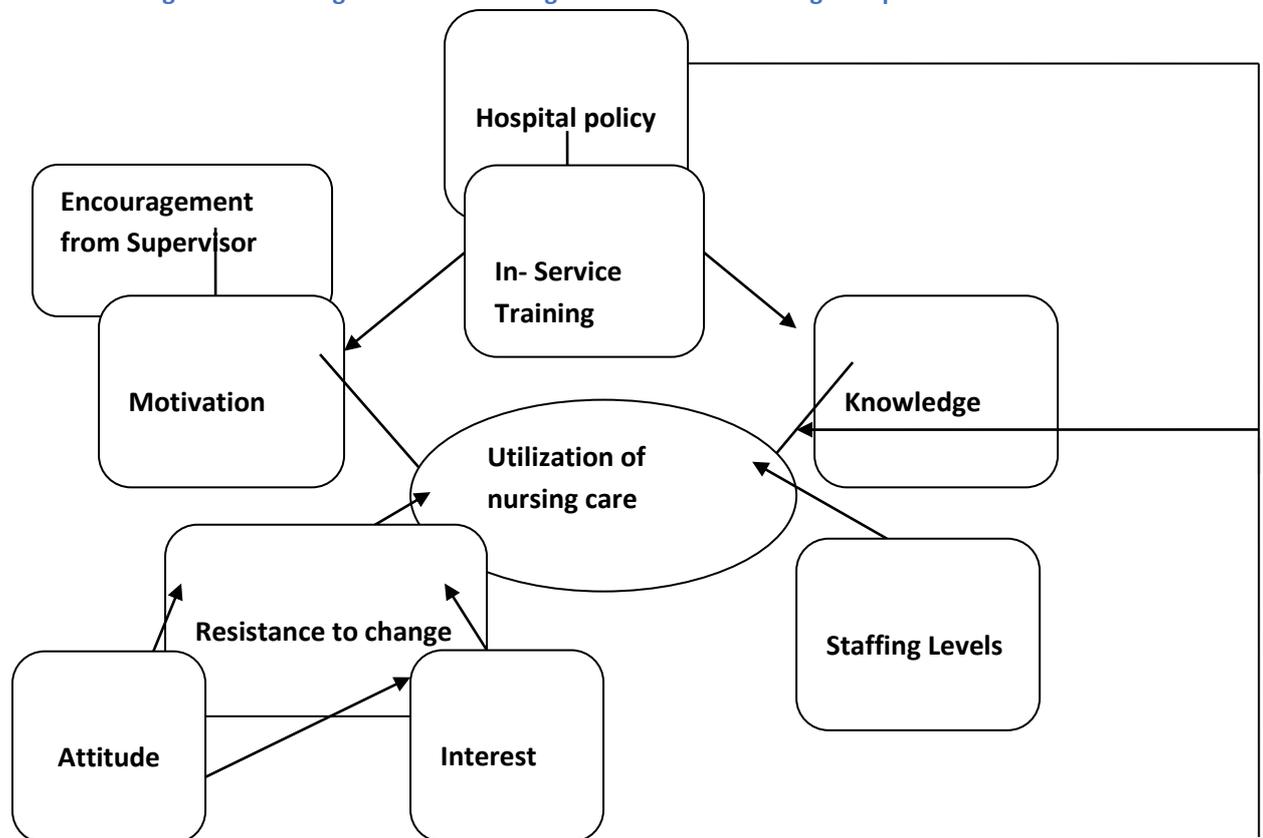
Resistance to change

Some nurses may resist change from the traditional and routine methods of care delivery to a more scientific method. They may prefer such methods than changing to a new scientific approach which they might not even be more familiar with.

Interest

Nurses with interest in the utilization of the nursing care plan are more likely to utilize the tool than those with less interest. The interest the nurses have may stimulate and motivate them to utilize the nursing care plan more than those nurses with little interest.

Diagram illustrating factors influencing to utilization of nursing care plan



Problem Justification

Nursing is principally concerned with assisting individuals through a range of activities that contribute to the restoration of health and recovery from illness. While nurses represent the core of the health care delivery system, their image remains that of individuals who are dependent on the doctor's supervision (Carpenito 1991: xi). The quality of nursing care at Kafue District Hospital has been and is still being questioned for its effectiveness.

The use of nursing care plan can have its benefit if measures to implement it were to be looked into by relevant authorities.

The nursing care plan is very important as it enables nurses provide the individualized nursing care. This in turn leads to good quality of care. The patient and his or her relatives are also involved in the planning of his/her care. Apart from that, the nursing care plan facilitates the use of uniform language among nurses as well as prevents repetitions of procedures on the patient. In this study, our main focus is on the factors that influence the utilization of the nursing care plan. The findings of this study will help to improve the quality of nursing care as well as reduce the recurrences of certain conditions that may result from poor nursing care. Information concerning the utilization of nursing care plans exists in literature, but does not answer the major questions about why the utilization of the nursing care plan is still poor. Therefore, there is need to carry out this study in order to identify the major factors that affect the use of the nursing care plan at Kafue District Hospital.

General Objectives

To determine the factors affecting the utilization of nursing care plan at Kafue District Hospital.

Specific objectives

- To determine knowledge levels of nurses on the use of the nursing care plan at Kafue District Hospital.
 - To establish the attitude of nurses towards the use of the nursing care plan.
 - To determine the level of motivation nurses receive from their supervisors on the utilization of the nursing care plan.
 - To investigate the effectiveness of in- service training on utilization of nursing care plan.
 - To assess whether staffing levels affects the utilization of nursing care plan
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- To make recommendations to management on how the nursing care plan can assist in improving the quality of care at the hospital.

Hypothesis

- Nurse's knowledge on nursing care plan contributes to the correct and continuous use of nursing care plans.
- Supervision of nurses contributes to the utilization of the nursing care plan

Conceptual Definitions

Policy is the statement that outlines what an institution stands for and it acts as a guide to the employees, Booyens (1997).

Training is the activity of imparting and acquiring skills

Supervise is to direct, manage or oversee; to be in -charge of an individual student or group.

Motivation is an incentive or reason for doing something

Staffing is a personal required for some project.

Attitude is a deposition or state of mind.

Knowledge is a general understanding or familiarity with a subject, place and situation.

Nursing is a profession within the health care sector focused on the care of individuals, families, and communities so they may attain, maintain, or recover optimal health and quality of life.

Nursing care is a Service that a professional nurse gives to patients or clients.

Patient is a person who is undergoing treatment or is ill.

Conceptual Model

A conceptual model is a set of interrelated concepts that symbolically represents and conveys a mental image and describes their relationships to the phenomena of central concern to the discipline, Tomey and Alligood, (2002).

In attempting to understand the utilization of the nursing care plan by the nurses at Kafue District Hospital, the **theory of reasoned action** was used.

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The theory of reasoned action was developed by Martin Fishbein (1980), derived from previous research that started out as the theory of attitude, which led to the study of attitude and behaviour. The theory was “born largely out of frustration with traditional attitude-behaviour research, much of it found weaker correlations between attitude measures and performance of volitional behaviours”. The key application of the theory of reasoned action is prediction of behavioural interactions, spanning predictions of attitude and that of behaviour. The subsequent separation of behavioural intention from behaviour allows for explanation of limiting factors on attitudinal influence Tomey and Alligood, (2002).

Predicted Relationships

The key application of the theory of reasoned action is prediction of behavioural intentions, spanning predictions of attitude and predictions of behaviour. This theory provides some empirical understanding on some of the potential influencing factors on certain behaviours, e.g. training, knowledge and attitude influencing utilization of the nursing care plan. According to the reasoned action approach, the first step to predict, understand, change or reinforce a given behaviour is to be absolutely specific about the behaviour of interest. The second step is to determine if the individual has an intention to carry out a specific behaviour. Intentions reflect all the motivational factors that influence specific behaviour and are the single best predictor of behaviour

According to the theory of reasoned action, the primary determinants of intention are attitude towards performing the specific behaviour, perceived norms or normative influences and self efficacy or perceived behavioural control which in this study are training, knowledge and attitude.

Training

According to the theory of reasoned action, training measures a person’s relative strength of intention to perform behaviour. The theory states that self-efficacy or perceived behavioural control is the person’s perceived ability to carry out specific behaviour successfully which can be attained among others through training. In this study, nursing training can have a bearing on the utilisation of the nursing care plan. A nurse who received both theory and practical experience during his/her training is more likely to utilise the nursing care plan than one who just received theory.

Attitude

The theory states that attitude consists of a person’s beliefs about the consequences of performing the behaviour multiplied by his or her valuation of these consequences. Attitude towards performing a specific behavior results from a positive or a negative evaluation of the outcome of behaviour. Perceived norms or normative influences refer to influences from significant others in the person’s life e.g. if a nurse has a negative attitude towards the utilization of the nursing care plan and perceives using it as time consuming, such negative attitudes tend to influence other nurses not to utilize nursing care plan also and this leads to resistance to change. Fear of being victimized by those who feel the use of the nursing care plan is time consuming can lead to a nurse’s low utilization of the nursing care plan.

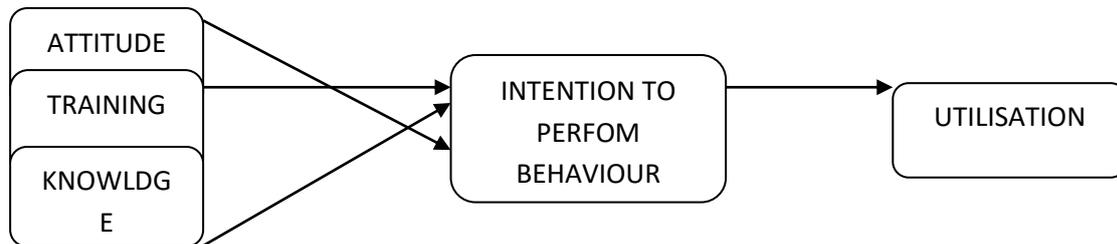
Knowledge

The theory of reasoned action looks at knowledge as one of the motivational factors that influence specific behaviour and as one of the best predictors of behaviour. Dyk, (2008). Intention can be conceptualized as a readiness to engage in a particular behaviour Fishbein, (2008). The theory states that subjective norm

(knowledge) is seen as a combination of perceived expectations from relevant individuals or groups along with intentions to comply with the expectations. In this study knowledge from training school or colleagues e.g. when a nurse knows how to utilise she/he is more likely to utilise it than when she/he lacks the knowledge.

Theoretical framework diagram

Figure 2:Diagram of theoretical framework (theory of Reasoned Action)



Variables, Indicators and Cut off Points

TABLE 1.

VARIABLE	INDICATORS	CUT OFF POINTS
Staffing Level	➤ Adequate	➤ 3-4 Nurses/ Shift
	➤ Poor	➤ 1-2 Nurses/ Shift
Knowledge	➤ High	➤ Able to score 4-5points
	➤ Moderate	➤ Able to score 3 Points
	➤ Low	➤ Able to score 0-2 points
Utilization	➤ High	➤ Able to score 2
	➤ Low	➤ Able to score 0-1
Motivation	➤ High	➤ Able to score 2-3 points
	➤ Low	➤ Able to score 0-1 point
In-service Training	➤ Adequate	➤ Attended
	➤ Inadequate	➤ Not attended
Attitude	➤ Positive	➤ Able to score 2
	➤ Negative	➤ Able to score 1

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